

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2004/11/04 : CIA-RDP89B00552R000400030001-2
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Review Staff: 75-3460/10
26 November 1975

Mr. A. Searle Field
Staff Director
Select Committee on Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Attention: Mr. Rushford

Dear Mr. Field:

Attached hereto are more than half of the documents requested by Mr. Rushford which relate to BACKFIRE. The documents have been sanitized to remove material not dealing with BACKFIRE, and to remove technical information not related to the substance of the reports. The remaining documents will be cleared for passage on Friday.

Sincerely,

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Review Staff

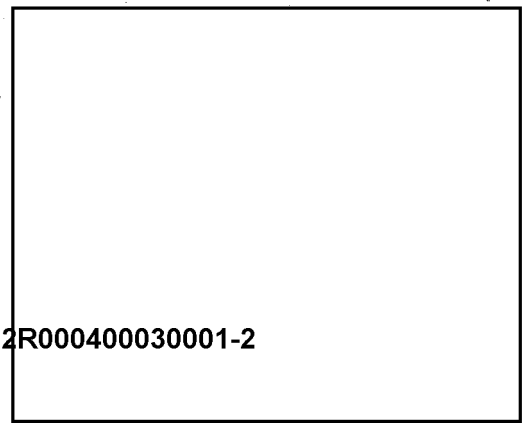
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USSR: Further Thoughts on the Backfire

There is mounting evidence that the newest Soviet bomber, the Backfire, may be a major modification of an older, intermediate-range bomber--the TU-22 Blinder--and not a new design. If so, this suggests that the Backfire is meant to replace the Blinder, and consequently would be used for missions on the periphery of the USSR rather than for intercontinental missions.

A detailed photographic comparison of the Backfire prototype and the Blinder shows a marked physical congruity between the airframe sections of the two aircraft, suggesting that the Backfire--at least the prototype, Backfire A--is a highly-modified TU-22 rather than a new design.

There have been many indications since the late 1960s that the Soviets have been extremely dissatisfied with the performance characteristics of the TU-22. Consequently they undertook a major modification of the aircraft. The result was a highly-modified Blinder--designated the TU-22M--distinguished by, among other things, variable-sweep wings. This modified Blinder entered production in 1969, the year the Backfire first appeared. Further strengthening the association of the TU-22M and the Backfire, it indicated that a TU-22M was at Ramenskoye Flight Test Center near Moscow at the time the Backfire was undergoing flight testing there.

According to [redacted], in 1969 while discussing the shortcomings of the Blinder, [redacted] said that a new bomber was under development, but that it would be two to three years before "large-scale production" began. [redacted] also implied that the new aircraft was not an intercontinental bomber. That time frame compares favorably with information from a [redacted] Soviet [redacted]

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who said that the TU-22M was expected to be delivered to operational units in 1971.

Two to three years is an extremely short period of time for a Soviet aircraft to complete development and flight testing, reach series production, and be delivered to operational units. To shorten the developmental period, the Soviets may have used available TU-22 Blinder components rather than designing and manufacturing completely new components, which would explain the physical similarity of Backfire and the TU-22.

The use of existing TU-22 components to the extent possible in the Backfire most likely would result in a higher weight for the aircraft than was previously estimated. This would in turn result in some decrease--how much has not yet been determined--in the estimated range of the Backfire.

The operational version of this aircraft--Backfire B--incorporates still further improvements over the prototype. The Backfire B is an improved version of the Backfire A--itself apparently an improvement on, and possibly a replacement for, the TU-22. It would seem that the Backfire is the aircraft that performs as the Blinder was intended to but never did.

The new information tends to confirm that the Backfire is best suited for, and is most likely intended to be used for, peripheral bombing missions. The pattern of Backfire deliveries to operational units thus far supports this contention. Backfire has been assigned to intermediate-range bomber units of Long Range and Naval Aviation.

If the Backfire B is, in fact, an evolutionary product of the Blinder design, some of the assumptions on which previous estimates of Backfire performance were based--particularly the idea that Backfire is a new, optimized design--may be faulty. Some of the areas that may need to be re-examined are fuel consumption and capacity, aerodynamic performance, and

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aircraft weight. A change in any of these could result in a change in the performance of the Backfire. A detailed analysis of Backfire performance is currently being undertaken. (TOP SECRET [REDACTED])

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

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Attached are the articles on SALT compliance issues for 1973-Present from the Central Intelligence Bulletins, National Intelligence Bulletins, and National Intelligence Dailies. They have been sanitized for only the most sensitive sources and methods. They must remain under the security classifications stamped on each article.

Also attached is a single paper (on top) provided upon special request to [redacted]

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11 December 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Miss Emily Sheketoff
House Select Committee on Intelligence

SUBJECT : Material on "Hold" Items

1. As agreed at our meeting earlier today, I am transmitting the following documents:

a. A general statement, "The Nature of Hold Items"

b. The "Matrix"

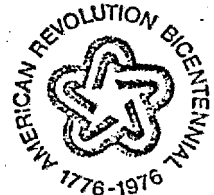
(c.) A companion piece to the "Matrix" which spells out in somewhat more detail the information contained in the matrix

(d.) The distribution list for the SALT Monitoring Reports

2. I have checked in red the items listed in the matrix which have already been forwarded to the House Select Committee.

3. You will note references in the matrix to two USIB SALT Steering Group reports: one dated 8 November 1972, and the other dated 7 August 1974. The distribution list of the 8 November 1972 report was as follows:

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